

IV. *A Letter from Mr. Ralph Thoresby, F. R. S.
to Dr. Hans Sloane, R. S. Sec. concerning some
Ancient Brass Instruments found in Yorkshire.*

Honoured S I R,

WEapons of Brass having been discontinued for many Ages, it may not perhaps be unacceptable to you to have an Account of some that were lately found in these Parts; for what use they were originally designed I dare not determine, so shall only relate Matter of Fact as to the discovery of them, and give you their form, desiring your Sentiments of them, and such ingenious Gentlemen as you may please to communicate this unto.

As the Servants of Mr. *Ellis* of *Kiddal* (Father to the present Sheriff of the County) were Plowing in a Place called *Osmond-thick*, near the noted *Bramham-Moor*, they discovered five or six Brass Instruments, which are of different sizes, from little more than 3 to 4 Inches and an half in length, and from 1 and a half to 2 Inches and an half in breadth: They are somewhat in the form of a Wedge, as proceeding from a thin Edge, which after so many Ages is tollerably sharp, to 1 and an half or 2 Inches at the thicker end, where they are wrought hollow to put upon a Shaft: Each of them has an Ear or Loop, which that you may the better perceive the form of, I have added the Figure of one (in its exact size) that was sent to this Repository. Some suppose them to have been *Arrows-heads*, or *Axes* of the ancient *Britains*; others, those of the *Roman Catapultæ*; but I think they are as much to heavy for the first, as they are

*See the Plate
at the begin-
ning.*

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too light for the last. I should rather take them to have been the *Heads* of *Spears*, or *Walking-staves* of the civilized *Britains*; and tho' of a somewhat different Form from those described by *Speed* (*Hist. of Great Brit. cap. 6.*) in their Portraitures, taken I presume from ancient Manuscripts, yet by the Loop in the side we may better conceive how those ornamental Labels were fastened, than by the Pictures there exemplified.

That *Swords* or *Daggers* were used of the same Metal in old time, as well in *Ireland* as *Great Britain*, (of which there are several described in the last Edition of the *Britannia*) I conjecture from some that were found there of late Years, one of which was brought me by a Friend from thence: It proves of a middle size, *viz.* eighteen Inches long in the Blade; whereas of those found in *Wales*, some were but Twelve, others Twenty four. The Hilt or Handle probably was of Wood, (as is that of an old Sword that I have now by me, which is five Foot and a half long) for that it is wholly consumed: They have been fastened together by four larger or two less Nails, as appears by the Holes in the Brass which are yet entire. And now that I am upon this subject, I have an ancient Spur, that is no less than six Inches and an half long, from the Heel to the middle of the Rowel; but this, which is gilded, and of nicer Workmanship, I suppose to be of a much later date.

I am, &c.

Ralph Thoresby.

